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ABSTRACT

This lesson uses the picture book "Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt" by Deborah Hopkinson and an interactive website to enhance third- through fifth-grade students' understanding of the Underground Railroad and slavery, development of reading comprehension skills, and application of mapping skills. During three 45-60 minute lessons, students will: identify the various uses for quilts and describe the significance of Clara's quilt; enhance their understanding of the Underground Railroad; create a problems/solutions/events chart for "Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt"; and apply mapping skills to make a "quilt map" showing their route from home to school. The instructional plan, lists of resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. A map scoring checklist; a problem/solutions/events chart; and an evaluation rubric are attached. Includes one chart. (PM)

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Escaping Slavery: *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*

ED 480 324

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Grade Band

3-5

Estimated Lesson Time

Three 45- to 60-minute periods over consecutive days

Overview

When visiting the recommended website in this lesson, students learn about the Underground Railroad and "walk in the shoes" of an escaping slave. Using the picture book *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*, students create a problems/solutions/events chart to help them understand the relationships between Clara's problems and how she solves them. Similar to Clara's map that shows the path north to freedom, students create their own map designing a key, a compass, and landmarks surrounding their home and school.

From Theory to Practice

Fisher, A.L. (2001). Implementing Graphic Organizer Notebooks: The art and science of teaching content. *The Reading Teacher, 55,* 116-120.

- Research studies indicate that graphic organizers are effective in improving students' reading, writing, and study strategies.
- Graphic organizers are better than outlines because "their visual format shows relationships between and among concepts."
- A Graphic Organizer Notebook is a collection of blank graphic organizers that are stored in a student's notebook and used during a particular unit of study. The format of each graphic organizer is tailored to the text materials being studied. Examples of text patterns include listings (e.g., main ideas), sequencing, compare/contrast, cause/effect, and problem/solution.

Perini, R.L. (2002). The pearl in the shell: Author's notes in multicultural children's literature. *The Reading Teacher, 55,* 428-431.

- An increasing number of multicultural children's books include an author's note, foreword, or afterword. These sections can aid readers' text comprehension by providing information about the story's setting, time period, and critical events.
- Multicultural literature supports expanding the curriculum to include literature by and about members of diverse cultural groups to "combat intolerance and foster a sense of inclusion...."

Miller, H.M. (2000). Teaching and Learning About Cultural Diversity: All of us together have a story to tell. *The Reading Teacher, 53,* 666-667.

- Establish procedures when selecting multicultural materials to use in the classroom. The NCTE website offers resources and support on censorship.

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- When integrating multicultural literature, make sure to use a variety of selections written by authors from inside and outside the culture.
- "But no one owns the stories . . . all of us together have a story to tell."

Student Objectives

Students will

- Identify the various uses for quilts and describe the significance of Clara's quilt
- Enhance their understanding of the Underground Railroad
- Create a problems/solutions/events chart for *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*
- Apply mapping skills to make a "quilt map" showing their route from home to school

Resources

- 12" x 16" drawing paper
- Map Scoring checklist
- Problems/solutions/events chart
- Evaluation rubric
- Teacher's copy of the problems/solutions/events chart
- The Underground Railroad (National Geographic Online)
- Xpeditions Atlas
- *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson (Random House, 1995)
- Chart paper, board, or overhead projector and transparencies
- Glue and scissors
- Markers, crayons, and pencils
- Quilt
- Student journals
- Wallpaper patterns

Instructional Plan

Preparation

1. Gather the materials listed under **Resources**.
2. Read *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson.

3. Determine student partners.

4. Decide on use of the board, chart paper, or an overhead transparency for recording students' oral responses.

5. Make an overhead transparency of the problems/solutions/events chart and also make copies of the chart for students.

6. Access and review the two websites used in this lesson:

    - Xpeditions Atlas, which can be used to generate a map of the United States and Canada
    - The Underground Railroad presented by National Geographic Online

Instruction and Activities

Day 1
Before reading

1. Show students a quilt and discuss the following questions with them.

    - How is a quilt made? (Answer: by stitching pieces of cloth together)
    - What material is used to make a quilt? (Answer: cloth)
    - Where does the cloth come from? (Answers: a store, leftover pieces from a sewing project, old clothes)
    - What are quilts used for? Record students' oral responses on the board. (Possible answers: blankets, wall hangings, maps, storytelling, family keepsakes)
    - In what ways have you used quilts? Have students share their own experiences.

2. Tell students that they are going to read a story about a slave girl, Clara, and a special quilt. If multiple copies of the book are available, distribute them to the students. If not, you can conduct this lesson using one copy of the book and reading it aloud.

3. Before reading, ask students to look at the illustration on the cover of the book and "picture walk" through the entire story. Select several students to tell what they see (e.g., title, girl and boy on hill, girl and boy picking cotton, and so on). Have students think about the pictures and then write in their journals what they think will happen in the story. Have students share their ideas with their partner, then select several students to share their ideas with the class. You can record students' responses on the board if you wish.

4. Based on your students' needs, you may integrate vocabulary instruction before, during, or after reading. Use your preferred method for instruction. Words to consider include seamstress, overseer, contrary, runaways, paterollers (slave's dialect pronunciation for patrollers), quarters, plantation, and swamp.

5. Have students read the first 12 pages of the story silently to see if their predictions were correct. To assist less able readers, you can read the story with students or have them listen to the story on audiotape. If only one copy of the book is available, read the book aloud.

After reading

6. Have students check their predictions for accuracy. If predictions were recorded on the chalkboard,

check them as a class. Remind students that predictions are guesses based on information they previewed before reading.

7. Using an overhead projector, display the transparency of the problems/solutions/events chart and begin to complete it as a class. Distribute copies of the chart to students as well so that they can record responses on their own copy of the chart and store it in a folder or notebook. (See the teacher's copy of the problems/solutions/events chart for possible responses.)

   a. Ask students to identify Clara's problems. Record students' responses under the heading "Problems."

   b. Ask students to recall the "major events" that happen in the story. Record students' responses under "Events."

8. Select a few of the following questions to generate a discussion. The discussion can be with the entire class, in small groups, or in the fishbowl method. (To perform the fishbowl method, divide the class into two groups. Arrange chairs in an outer and inner circle. The inner circle of students discusses the first question as the outer circle of students listens. When the discussion has concluded, have the outer circle of students move to the inner circle. They can further discuss the first question or respond to others.)

   - What was Clara's dream? (Detail)
   - Why was Aunt Rachel determined to teach Clara how to sew? (Inference)
   - Who were the "paterollers?" (Vocabulary)
   - What was the Underground Railroad? Why was the North Star important? (Detail)

Day 2

1. It is not unusual for children to perceive the Underground Railroad as a train or subway system. Because the story they are reading involves the Underground Railroad, have students think about what they already know about the Underground Railroad and then write their ideas in their journal. Their writing can be in a list form or phrases. The purpose of this activity is to activate prior knowledge; therefore, it is not important to evaluate students' writing for spelling or grammar. Have students share their ideas with a partner. Hold a class discussion for students to share the information they already know about the Underground Railroad.

2. It is important for students to understand the dangers that faced the fugitive slaves and the Underground Railroad stationmasters, agents, and conductors. Have students visit The Underground Railroad developed by National Geographic Online. Click on "Enter" found under the swinging lantern. At this interactive site titled "The Journey," students will "walk in the shoes" of a runaway slave deciding whether to take the risks and continue on a journey to freedom or turn around and return to the misery of slavery.

3. Ask students to write in their journal a minimum of one new piece of information that they learned after completing the online activity at National Geographic Online.

4. Conduct an "oral symphony" where each student tells one new piece of information that he or she learned. Continue around the room until all students have had an opportunity to share.

Day 3
Before reading

1. Have students read the problems/solutions/events chart that is stored in their folder or notebook. They can reread the first 12 pages of *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* to refresh their memory of

the story. Select several students to tell a summary of the first 12 pages of the story.

2. Explain why it was important for the slaves to know north, south, east, and west (i.e., to reach freedom). Using the Xpeditions Atlas, generate a map of the United States showing where Ohio, the Ohio River, and Canada are located. Identify the directions of north, south, east, and west on the map and in your classroom.

3. Have students write in their journals what they think will happen at the end of the story. Ask them to share their predictions with their partner. Select several students to share with the class. You can record responses on the board if you wish.

4. Have students read silently (or you read aloud) to the end of the book.

After reading

5. As students finish reading, instruct them to individually complete the problems/solutions/events chart for the last part of the story. Their writing needs to include additional major events in the story and the solutions to the problems. (See the teacher's copy of the problems/solutions/events chart for possible responses.)

   You can circulate around the class to observe students' responses while working or review the charts at a later time. Students who do not correctly identify the events and solutions can meet with you as a flexible group to review and make corrections.

6. Select from the following questions to generate a class discussion.

   - How did Jack help Clara with the map? (Detail)
   - Why didn't Clara take the quilt with her to Canada? (Inference)

7. Have students respond to the following writing prompt in their journals: "Describe the purposes of quilts and the significance of Clara's quilt."

Map Making Activity

Explain to students that they will be making a map similar to Clara's "quilt map." Their map will show the route they take from home to school. After demonstrating to the class the steps for creating a map, have each student complete his or her own map. Share the Map Scoring checklist with students so they understand how their maps will be evaluated. Assist students with this activity as needed.

1. On a map of your local area, circle the school's location with a red circle. For demonstration purposes, choose any location on the map to show its relation to the school. Direct students' attention to the north, south, east, and west positions in the classroom. Using a 12" x 16" sheet of paper, place the school at the top, bottom, left, or right side of the paper with the location that you selected opposite depending on its position relative to the school. These activities will help students determine where their home is in relation to the school. Following your demonstration, students can begin their own map of the school and their home.

2. In pencil, draw buildings (squares), streams (wavy lines), lakes (circles), railroads (crossed lines), roads (thick lines), and other landmarks that are significant markers for the map. These can be labeled by name. Relate these landmarks to those Clara identified in the story (rivers, fields, roads, buildings). Students can complete this portion of their own map after your demonstration.

3. Have students use dotted lines to show the path from their home to school.

4. Invite students to select various wallpaper pieces to represent water, buildings, land, and other

landmarks, and cut them into 4" x 4" squares.

5. Show students how they can arrange the squares over the paper and transfer the pencil drawings onto the wallpaper squares using markers or crayons. Glue the squares in place.

6. Help students add a key and a directional compass to their maps.

Have students share their finished maps with the class. Maps can be displayed on a bulletin board.

Extensions

Surf the Web

- To learn more about the Underground Railroad, access the website created by Mrs. Taverna's second-grade class titled Harriet Tubman & The Underground Railroad. Her students have developed crossword puzzles, character sketches, time lines, poems, and a vocabulary quilt.
- To learn more about author Deborah Hopkinson, visit her website, which include links to related websites about the Underground Railroad and to lesson plans about quilts.
- To learn more about quilting and its history, visit the website, America's Quilting History.

Read More About It

Read other books about quilts:

- *The Patchwork Quilt* by Valorie Flournoy (Pearson Learning, 1995)
- *The Secret to Freedom* by Marcia K. Vaughan (Lee & Low Books, 2001)
- *Luka's Quilt* by Georgia Guback (Greenwillow, 1994)
- *The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Polacco (Aladdin Library, 2001)

Read other books about the Underground Railroad:

- *Under the Quilt of Night* by Deborah Hopkinson (Atheneum, 2002)
- *Minty* by Alan Schroeder (Puffin, 2000)
- *Secret Signs* by Anita Riggio (Boyds Mill Press, 1997)
- *Allen Jay and the Underground Railroad* by Marlene Targ Brill (First Avenue Editions, 1993)
- *Journey to Freedom: A Story of the Underground Railroad* by Courtni C. Wright (Holiday House, 1997)
- *If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad* by Ellen Levine (Scholastic Trade, 1993)

Student Assessment/Reflections

Students' achievement of the objectives will be based upon the following assessment strategies:

Objective	Assessment
Students will	
Identify the various uses for quilts and describe the significance of Clara's quilt	Evaluation rubric
Enhance their understanding of the Underground Railroad	Teacher observation of responses during the "oral symphony." If every student is able to share one new piece of information, then understanding has been enhanced.
Create a problems/solutions/events chart for *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*	Evaluation rubric
Apply mapping skills to make a "quilt map" showing their route from home to school	Evaluation rubric

IRA/NCTE Standards

1 - Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

2 - Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

5 - Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

9 - Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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Map Scoring Checklist

Name:_____ Date:_____

Map from Home to School

Item	Looks good	Needs work
A directional compass is included and accurate.		
A key is included and accurate.		
Landmarks are included and match the key.		
The location of my home related to school and all landmarks are accurate.		
The selected wallpaper patterns and colors depict landmarks.		
My map is neat and detailed.		

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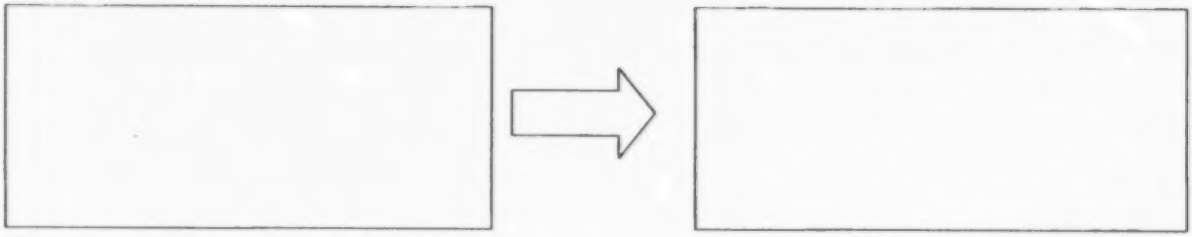
Problems/Solutions/Events Chart **Name** _____

Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt

Problems

Solutions



Events

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Evaluation Rubric

***Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* Lesson**

Assessment	Outstanding	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Journal response related to the uses of quilts and the significance of Clara's quilt (see Day 3)	Journal response includes four of the uses discussed on Day 1 and Clara's quilt map as a way to escape slavery. Sentence form is used with correct spelling and grammar.	Journal response includes two to three of the uses discussed on Day 1 and Clara's quilt map as a way to escape slavery. Sentence form is used with most words spelled correctly. Most grammar usage is correct.	Journal response includes one of the uses discussed on Day 1 and a correct or incorrect statement about the significance of Clara's quilt. Sentence or list form is used with most words spelled incorrectly. Grammar usage needs improvement.
Problems/solutions /events chart	Both problems and solutions are clearly identified and related. All events are correct and sequential.	One problem and solution is clearly identified and related. The majority of events are correct and sequential.	Unable to identify the problems and solutions. Few events are correct or sequential.
Quilt map	Map includes all appropriate landmarks in correct location to home and school. Key and directional compass are included and accurate. Strong relationship between selected wallpaper patterns and landmarks. Work shows outstanding attention to detail and neatness.	Map includes several landmarks in correct location to home and school. Key and directional compass are included and accurate. Satisfactory relationship between selected wallpaper patterns and landmarks. Work shows adequate attention to detail and neatness.	Map includes few landmarks usually incorrectly located. Key and directional compass are missing. Little relationship exists between selected wallpaper patterns and landmarks. Work shows little or no attention to detail and neatness.

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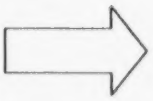
Problems/Solutions/Events Chart
Teacher's Copy

Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt

Problems

Clara wants to be with her mother.

Clara wants to escape from slavery.



Solutions

Clara and Jack leave the Home Plantation for North Farm. They find Clara's mother and travel north.

Clara makes a quilt that is a map to freedom in the north. The quilt remains with Aunt Rachel to help others.

Events

Clara is separated from her mother.

Aunt Rachel teaches Clara how to sew, to get her out of working in the fields.

Clara hears men talking about the runaways, the Ohio River, the Underground Railroad, Canada, and a map.

Aunt Rachel explains to Clara the location of Canada and the North Star. Clara learns about maps.

Clara realizes she can make a map in a quilt to show the way to freedom.

People tell Clara information to help her make a quilt map.

Clara gives the finished quilt map to Aunt Rachel when she leaves the plantation.

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